



## **Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture**

Date: May 6, 2021

Time: 7:00-9:00p

Location: Zoom

### **Minutes**

**Attending:** Christine Noah, Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, Stewart Ikeda, Tom Davison, Steve Poltorzyski, Lidia Kenig-Scher, Tom Formicola, Beth Locke, Andrea Nicolay, Stephanie Marlin-Curiel

**Absent:** Sarah Morgan-Wu, Adria Arch

**Guests:** Ali Carter, Nick Castellano (Grants Committee), Cecily Miller, Terry Holt

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm

### **1) ROLL CALL AND RULES OF REMOTE MEETINGS CONDUCTED DURING COVID-19**

### **2) APPROVAL OF APRIL MINUTES**

- Minutes unanimously approved as amended

### **3) UPDATE ON THE YOUTH BANNERS and CONTROVERSY**

- Cristin and Stewart met with the Select Board and members of APD, and had some great conversations with the community. The Youth Banners will come down after a reception with awardees because the Arlington High School graduation banners need to go up in mid-May.
- Stewart noted that there is a multi-town student-led initiative he wants to host at the Umbrella, and the banners could have a future life as part of that project. Cecily also recommended potentially hanging the banners on the high school construction fence. It was noted that lack of support from town leadership means we probably cannot do that, but there is a possibility to link the banners with the fence for future iterations.
- In terms of what ACAC has learned from this experience, the use of the light pole space is what gets approved by the Select Board, not the images, but next year the SB would want to see the images. From the discussion with the SB, they do not consider the light poles political space. So in the future they would not be likely to approve anything too controversial. The question for ACAC then becomes whether the light poles are the best space for this initiative
- How has our relationship with the Select Board been impacted by this and what steps do we need to take to mend that. Next year we should have an earlier engagement with the Select Board and highlight any work that comes up like this. We should be sure to publish artist statements in advance
- Some comments from Commissioners: Freedom of expression is a fundamental right. Commissioners tried to be very transparent of what we did. A few Commissioners had a listening tour with the police who felt targeted by a particular banner depicting a young black woman with a megaphone facing a police officer with a stick and tear gas.

### **4) BUDGET UPDATE**

- We have by now spent down the town allocation.

- We will come close to achieving the revenue we budgeted within this fiscal year. Our overall goal is to have some funds that carry over from one fiscal year to the other between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

## 5) FUNDRAISING

- We have been sending out reminders about Spruce Up Arlington. We had a positive response and two or three new gifts came in in the last week. We are up to about \$3,000.
- Neighborhood Haiku in the Heights is part of bringing arts to the business districts and 35 businesses in the Heights are contributing in some form, in-kind and otherwise.
- Coldwell Banker wondered whether a specific agent could be associated and recognized as an ACAC donor. There has been so much positive response to the invitation and the work.
- The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) was awarded a \$17,000 climate resiliency grant from MAPC that Cecily wrote for the project she has been wanting to do with Tom Starr's "markers from a climate future." Cecily felt it would be a great project for Green Teams and to celebrate Arlington's volunteer activist fabric. Some of Tom's projects have been done in connection with planning. We are partnering with the DPCD's environmental planning department, but also all the volunteer citizen groups working on sustainability in some form. All volunteers would come up with content and Rachel Olivieri and Cecily would curate the responses.
- The \$17,000 will cover fees to artists and coordinators.

## 7) WARRANT ARTICLE AT TOWN MEETING

- Article 10 – ACAC had submitted a warrant article about redoing street performance procedures for Town Meeting 2020, but decided not to move forward at this time because the parks were being so heavily used.
- Article 35 addresses the need for more artist studio space in Arlington. When the opportunity arose to make changes in industrial zoning, DPCD, inserted artists mixed use (live/work) in an industrial zone even though residential space is usually not allowed in an industrial zone. Ali noted that the town originally wanted to modernize the industrial zone to tech uses, and other things such as you would find in Kendall Square. A pro forma analysis was conducted by the project's consultants, RKG, to test if the zoning recommendations would realistically increase the commercial tax base in town. They determined that without including some residential component, thereby making buildings mixed use rather than just strictly industrial, new industrial uses were unlikely to take root because the projects would not be profitable without a residential component. Based on that analysis as well as input from Arts and Culture Action Plan and recent advocacy from the ACAC and other artists in town, the zoning recommendation was written to have the residential component in the industrial zones be limited to artists' mixed use, which is described in detail below:

Artists' Mixed-Use.

Any portion of a building devoted to such use shall be subject to the following conditions:

- Occupied by persons certified as artists pursuant to the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) Artist Certification Process,
- Designed in accordance with ACAC standards and guidelines for artists' mixed-use space, and
- Subject to an agreement for artists' housing as part of the conditions of a special permit granted by the Redevelopment Board or Board of Appeals, as applicable

In short, the purpose of residential in mixed-use is to realize industrial. And the residential uses in industrial zones would be strictly limited to artists and carefully reviewed.

- ATED has made a statement:  
The Arlington Committee on Tourism & Economic Development supports allowing the expansion and availability of artist live-work spaces and flexible space accommodation for emerging businesses within the town of Arlington. We recognize the need for greater latitude within our zoning bylaws to accommodate the evolving infrastructure and needs of each of these populations and their beneficial contributions to the Arlington community today and into the future.
- Tom Davison is working with someone in his precinct to appear at Town Meeting to post this.
- Tom also provided a reference to a Boston plan for artist housing <http://www.bostonplans.org/housing/artist-live-work-program/artist-live-work-housing-overview>. There is proof of this happening in other communities.

- Discussion ensued as to whether to add our names to the ATED statement or draft a separate statement. It was decided to draft a separate ACAC statement in order to show more organizational support.

#### **PUBLIC ART UPDATES**

- Neighborhood Haiku in the Heights is happening. There are four Haiku workshops with Jessie Brown in May. Rob Davison has donated new graphic design for Neighborhood Haiku. Janet Riordin has been going door to door and recruited 35 host businesses
- We are making the small businesses the site of the public art as in Storefront Stories. ACAC has hired a sign maker. He is Japanese and came to America to learn American sign making. He does hand painted signs and is doing a two-part workshop for us. We are recruiting people who have some skill level in hand painting or lettering to learn from him and then paint the haiku's on the businesses.
- Next Wednesday, May 12, a great panel discussion building on Michelle Lougee's project has come together as part of Arlington's Eco Week. The panel is focused on how to fight plastic pollution. Katherine Clark (via prerecorded video) joins Alejandro Duran, who transforms global ocean trash into gorgeous installations as part of beach cleanups in Mexico, Ron Whyte, Project Coordinator with Trash Academy in Philadelphia, and Celidh Yurenka who owns a small business selling plastic-free products in Arlington \*Yes! plastic Free).
- Nilou Mochala has done 45 interviews with community members and has completed the sketches made in response to these interviews. The Community Engagement Committee is organizing a house party as a fundraising event with the goal of raising \$2500 to match the MCC grant. Two people are needed to co-host. To be a host, make a pledge and invite friends who would have means and support to this project.
- Nilou will give the stories behind the stories. She has talked to Adam Chapdelaine, the fire chief, head of circulation at the library, senior, low-income, entrepreneurs, youth. Those interviews will be preserved in Robbins Library Covid archive. Nilou's installation will go up in the first week in June in Menotomy Rocks parks. The archive has not been launched yet. When there is critical mass, it will be launched online and celebrated.
- Save the date, Tuesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> for an artist talk with Chanel Thervil.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- The Council on Aging is trying to assist home-bound seniors that have not been vaccinated yet. IF you know anyone who can benefit, please refer them to the Council on Aging.
- Shout out goes to Terry Holt for redoing the Artlinks positioning on the Arts Arlington Page
- Terry has been doing some long-range planning for the website that we are setting aside budget for in the coming year.

Meeting adjourned 8:49 pm

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Marlin-Curiel

Next meeting: June 3, 7pm